

#### REMARKS

Claims 10-18 were allowed in the Office Action of 9/29/03.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly not setting forth the structure of the draft rod providing the function of limiting upward vertical movement of the deck relative to the frame to a predetermined upper stop location. The examiner is requested to reconsider this rejection.

Applicants respectfully assert that claim 1 is definite in scope. However, in the interest of advancing the prosecution of the application, claim 1 has been clarified. In particular, claim 1 now recites, in part, "the draft rod being movably connected to a mounting section of the deck and longitudinally slidingly connected to the portion of the frame to limit upward vertical movement."

Claims 1-8, 19 and 20 were then rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Seegert (US 5937625). Claim 9 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. The examiner is also requested to reconsider this rejection and objection.

Claim 1 recites that the draft rod is movably connected to a mounting section of the deck and longitudinally slidingly connected to the portion of the frame to limit **upward** vertical movement of the deck relative to the frame **to a predetermined**

upper stop location during in-use operation. In Seegert the draft rod 34 merely limits downward vertical movement. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Seegert of the draft rod 34 being used to limit upward vertical movement during in-use operation. The features of claim 1 are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable and should be allowed. Likewise, dependent claims 2-9 are patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 19 states that the limiting bar comprises a stop surface located between the deck and the frame for limiting longitudinal movement of the bar through the hole in the frame during in-use operation. Seegert shows the rod 34 having enlarged loop section at 36 (see Fig. 3). However, as can be seen in Fig. 1 and 2, the enlarged loop section will not come near the structural member 46 (see Fig. 5). If it did, the belt 20 would become too loose for the lawn mower to work. There is no disclosure or suggestion of a limiting bar comprising a stop surface located between the deck and the frame for limiting longitudinal movement of the bar through the hole in the frame during in-use operation. The features of claim 19 are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. Therefore, claim 19 is patentable and should be allowed. Dependent claim 20 is also patentable and should be allowed.

In view of the examiner's suggestion at page 4, claim 9 has been rewritten in independent form including the features of base claim 1, as well as intervening claim 8, and provided as new claim 21. This claim also is patentable and should be allowed.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain, the Examiner is invited to call Applicant's Attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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